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ABSTRACT

This report presents the methodology, data analysis, results, and highlights of a graduate follow-up survey conducted in 1998 at Nevada's Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) for the 1996-97 graduating cohort. The goal of the study was to find out graduates' opinions of TMCC, their employment status and location, and the extent to which students attributed the attainment of their job and or advancements within an occupation to the education they received at the college. A broader intent of the research was to establish a student employment database that could be utilized to initiate a TMCC employer satisfaction survey. Almost three-quarters of the 110 (27%) respondents felt that their overall experience at TMCC was good, and 91% reported that they would definitely recommend TMCC to a relative or friend. Of those who obtained a vocational degree (either AAS or certificate), 72% were working full-time and 65% were employed in a field directly related to their degree. Of those who obtained academic degrees (AA, AGS), 50% were working full-time and 40% were employed in a field directly related to their degree. The top skills graduates declared they gained from attending TMCC were as follows: improvement in decision making (85%); broadening of intellectual interests (82%); respect for varying points of view (82%); and the ability to write clearly (78%). (JA)

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ED 443 472

GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

TRUCKEE MEADOWS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FALL 1998

D. Noekler

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Introduction

Research was initiated in the Summer of 1998 to track prior graduates of Truckee Meadows Community College. A one-year follow-up survey was distributed to the 1996-97 graduating cohort. The goal of this study was to gain insight regarding graduates' opinions of TMCC, their employment status and location, as well as the extent to which students attributed the attainment of their job and/or advancements within an occupation to the education they received at the College. Furthermore, a broader intent of this research was to establish a student employment database that could be utilized to initiate a TMCC employer satisfaction survey.

Methodology

Population: The target population of this study was all TMCC graduates from the 1996-97 academic year. This cohort was comprised of 408 graduates. From this group of students, 110 use-able surveys were returned, producing a 27% response rate.

Instrumentation & Procedure: The survey was designed as a single flyer that could be folded in reverse for return mailing. The population was offered a five-dollar coupon at Raley's Super-market for the return of the survey and given an open-ended return date.

Data Analysis: In order to obtain statistically significant results (95% confidence level, ±4 margin of error) approximately 240 completed surveys were needed (response rate = 59%). In lieu of the fact that a statistically significant response was not obtained, direct correlative statements regarding the results should be used with caution. Although the

response rate was lower than desired, the descriptive statistics produced from this survey can be utilized to gain insight into the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of TMCC graduates.

Results

In general, graduates responding to the survey looked favorably upon TMCC, and felt that TMCC played a role in the success they experienced after graduation. Almost three-quarters of the respondents felt that their overall experience at TMCC was good, and that they would definitely recommend TMCC to a relative or friend. Detailed student evaluations of TMCC varied depending upon the current life situations of students and/or the type of degree they obtained.

More than the majority of the respondents stated that TMCC adequately prepared them for their current job (61%). At the time of the survey, 81% of the respondents were employed, 60% full-time and 21% part-time*. Of those who obtained a vocational degree (either AAS or certificate) 72% were working full-time and 65% were employed in a field directly related to their degree. The cohort of full-time employees was more likely to have a job directly related to their degree. Of those who obtained academic degrees (AA, AGS), 50% were working full-time and 40% were employed in a field directly related to their degree. Those who earned an AAS or certificate were more likely to receive a job advancement or a new job upon graduation and less likely to keep the same job they held before graduating. In contrast, an overwhelming majority (69%) of academic degree earners were still in the same job they held prior to graduation.

The respondents gave favorable ratings to TMCC on its ability to prepare them for advancing their education. Not surprisingly, those who earned an academic degree (AA or AGS) were significantly more willing to commit to advanced schooling; almost the majority (48%) of the academic degree earners have continued their education. On the other hand, only 22% of those who earned an AAS were enrolled in a four-year college. Four-year college experiences seemed to affect the respondents' views of TMCC. The current four-year college students tended to be more appreciative of the availability of courses at TMCC than non-four-year college students.

Overall, respondents viewed their experiences at TMCC in a favorable light. Not only did the majority of respondents state their education at TMCC helped them obtain a job or advance their careers, but they also indicated that their educational experiences contributed to broadening intellectual interests and improving decision making abilities. When posed with the question, "Would you recommend TMCC to friend or family member?" nearly 100% of the students indicated that they would.

* 50% of those who declared as "part-time" workers actually work more than 30hrs/wk.

Highlights:

- 44% of the respondents had obtained an academic degree (AA or AGS), while 55% were vocational degree earners (AAS or certificate). 1% did not respond to this question.

- At the time of the survey, 59% of the respondents were employed on a full-time basis.
- More than the majority of the respondents (61%) stated that TMCC adequately prepared them for their current job.
- 69% of the respondents stated that their current jobs were directly or somewhat related to the degree they earned at TMCC.
- 18% of the graduates who responded to the survey earned their second degree at TMCC.
- Many students were still enrolled in higher education; 33% were attending TMCC, and 38% were attending a 4-year college or university (some students may have been dually enrolled at TMCC & UNR).
- 37% of the respondents had started a new job or had received a job advancement upon graduation, while 47% had kept the same job held prior to graduation.
- Approximately two out of every five graduates were employed in the private sector.
- The top five skills graduates declared they gained from attending TMCC: improvement in decision-making (85%), broadening of intellectual interests (82%), respect for varying points of view (82%), and the ability to write clearly (78%).
- Favorable ratings of TMCC: overall experience (73%), quality of general education (67%), quality of instruction by faculty (63%), accessibility to faculty (62%), and availability of courses (55%).
- 91% stated they would recommend TMCC to a friend or family member.

TABLE 1. Degree Related Employment by Major (AAS Degree Earners)

Department	Degree Related Job			Total	Percent
	Directly Related	Somewhat	Not at all		
Architectural Design Tech.	2			2	4%
Automotive Tech.	1			1	2%
Business	1	3	2	6	13%
Comp. & Office	1			1	2%
Criminal Justice	3	1	4	8	18%
Dental Assisting	1			1	2%
Early Childhood Ed.	1			1	2%
Engineering Drafting Tech.	2			2	4%
Environmental Cont. Tech.	1			1	2%
Fire Science Tech.	6		1	7	16%
Legal Assistant	1	1		2	4%
Nursing	8	2	1	11	24%
Substance Abuse Counseling	1			1	2%
Unknown	1			1	2%
Total	30	7	8	45	100%
Percent	67%	16%	18%	100%	

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